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General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 30 September 2010, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Chipaziwa ..... (Zimbabwe)

Contents

Agenda item 5: Election of the officers of the Main Committees

Organization of work

Requests for hearings

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10-56235 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 5: Election of the officers of the Main Committees

1. **The Chairperson** said that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had nominated Ms. Zamora (Costa Rica) for the remaining office of Vice-Chairperson of the Committee for the sixty-fifth session.

2. *Ms. Zamora (Costa Rica) was elected Vice-Chairperson by acclamation.*

Organization of work (A/C.4/65/1; A/C.4/65/L.1; A/C.4/64/INF/1)

3. **The Chairperson** drew attention to document A/C.4/65/1, which contained the agenda items allocated to the Committee, and to document A/C.4/65/L.1, which contained the Committee's programme of work with a proposed timetable.

4. He then drew attention to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly contained in the report of the General Committee (A/65/250) regarding the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in General Assembly decision 34/401 and resolutions 58/126 and 58/316.

5. In order to make full use of the time and conference services that had been made available to the Committee, he would convene and adjourn meetings promptly and would convene meetings only when there were sufficient delegations inscribed on the list of speakers. All speakers, in particular the first three speakers for a given meeting, should be present in the Committee room on time.

6. The Assembly had decided to continue its practice of departing from the rule that one quarter of the members must be present for a Main Committee meeting to be declared open. On questions of procedure and organization of work, the Committee would comply strictly with the relevant provisions of General Assembly decision 34/401 (A/520/Rev.17, annex V). In line with the time limits for explanations of vote and rights of reply, statements on points of order should be limited to five minutes. He suggested that statements by members of the Committee during the general debate should not exceed 10 minutes, or 15 minutes in the case of those speaking on behalf of several delegations.

7. With respect to resolutions, he drew attention, inter alia, to paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 48/264, which encouraged Member States to exercise restraint in making proposals requesting new reports of the Secretary-General, and to paragraph 69 of resolution 57/270 B, which requested that resolutions should be short and focus more on action-oriented operative paragraphs.

8. With regard to programme budget implications and rule 153 of the rules of procedure, he noted that the General Assembly had drawn the Committee's attention to paragraph 12 of its decision 34/401, which stated that it was imperative for the Main Committees to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. That could take a few days, depending on the type and complexity of a proposal. Draft resolutions, draft decisions and amendments, together with the names of the sponsors thereof, should be submitted, in writing, to the Secretariat, in both electronic and hard copies. The Secretariat required at least 48 hours to process a draft resolution.

9. According to paragraph 3 (b) of section C of the annex to resolution 58/316, the Committee would, at the end of the session, adopt a provisional programme of work for the next session. Agenda item 118, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", had been allocated to the Committee solely for the purpose of approving the tentative programme of work for the Committee's next session. Agenda item 130, entitled "Programme planning", had been allocated to all the Main Committees and to the plenary of the General Assembly, in order to enhance discussion of evaluation, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports. Thus far, he had not received any information on that agenda item.

10. The Committee would continue with the practice of convening panels and holding interactive dialogues under agenda item 50, entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", agenda item 51, entitled "United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East", item 53, entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects" and item 54, entitled "Questions relating to information".

11. In accordance with the decisions taken in connection with the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, particularly resolutions 56/509 and 58/126, the Committee would take up agenda item 5, entitled "Election of the officers of the Main Committees", approximately three months before the next session of the Assembly.

12. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the programme of work and the timetable contained in document A/C.4/65/L.1.

13. *It was so decided.*

14. **The Chairperson** said that, as at previous sessions, the Committee would set up a working group of the whole to prepare draft resolutions for submission under agenda item 50, entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space". It was his understanding that the working group would be chaired by the delegation of Romania. He took it that the Committee wished to establish the group.

15. *It was so decided.*

16. **The Chairperson** noted that, in approving its programme of work and timetable, the Committee had decided to hold one general debate covering all agenda items relating to decolonization, namely items 55 to 59. Doing so would enable Committee members to speak on any or all of those agenda items at any meeting devoted to the topic.

Requests for hearings (aides-memoires 01/10 and 01/10/Add.1)

17. **The Chairperson** drew attention to aides-memoires 01/10 and 01/10/Add.1, which contained 109 requests for hearings on the questions of Gibraltar, Guam, New Caledonia, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the United States Virgin Islands and Western Sahara, and suggested that they should be circulated as Committee documents.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **The Chairperson** said that he had also received communications from the Chief Minister of Gibraltar and from the President of the Government of New Caledonia, who wished to make statements under agenda item 59. Those statements would be scheduled accordingly.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

United Nations A/C.4/65/SR.2

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 2nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 4 October 2010, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Chipaziwa ..... (Zimbabwe)

Contents

Agenda item 55: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations*

Agenda item 56: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories*

Agenda item 57: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations*

Agenda item 58: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories*

Agenda item 59: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other items*)*

Requests for hearings

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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10-56544 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 55: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (A/65/23 and Corr.1, chaps. VII and XII, and A/65/66)

Agenda item 56: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/65/23 and Corr.1, chaps. V and XII)

Agenda item 57: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/65/23 and Corr.1, chaps. VI and XII, and A/65/61/Corr.1)

Agenda item 58: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/65/67)

Agenda item 59: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other items*) (A/65/23 and Corr.1, chaps. VIII, IX, X, XI and XII, A/65/306 and A/65/330)

1. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking as Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Decolonization, introduced the report of the Special Committee (A/65/23 and Corr.1). It reviewed various aspects of the Special Committee's activities during 2010 and its plans for future work; gave an account of the 2010 Pacific regional seminar held in New Caledonia; focused on specific themes and on individual situations in Territories in chapters II to XI; concluding in chapter XII with its recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the Territories in a series of draft resolutions. The attention of the Committee was drawn to draft resolution IX, entitled "Fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples", and draft resolution X, entitled "Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism".

2. **Mr. St. Aimee** (Saint Lucia), speaking as Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, recalled that 14 December would mark a significant milestone, the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of that Declaration. Since the establishment of the United Nations, about 750 million people in 80 former colonies had gained their independence. However, even with fewer than 2 million people currently living under colonial rule, the decolonization process, notwithstanding two International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism, remained incomplete and that was why a draft resolution on a Third International Decade had been submitted. The decolonization process could only be addressed within the context of current realities and a sustainable future. The international community might need to find creative ways to resolve the difficulties inherent to decolonization, paying closer attention to the economic and social needs and interests of the peoples concerned.

3. The lack of significant progress in doing away with colonialism stemmed from the lack of adequate political will and interaction between and among the main protagonists to implement the resolutions adopted on the issue. Only Timor-Leste had been decolonized since the First Decade on Decolonization had been proclaimed. In that context, the organization by Tokelau of two referendums on self-determination in 2006 and 2007 in close cooperation with New Zealand was a good example for other administering Powers to follow. The Special Committee would continue its dialogue and cooperation with the administering Powers and consultation with the peoples of the Territories, with a view to developing case-by-case decolonization programmes of work for each Territory.

4. One of the Special Committee's main tasks was to submit to the General Assembly concrete proposals for the decolonization of individual Territories. In that regard, the regional seminars, held alternatively in the Caribbean and Pacific regions, provided excellent opportunities to enhance education and public awareness of decolonization, thereby ensuring that the peoples of the Territories were in a position to make informed decisions regarding their future political status. The frank debates at the 2010 Pacific seminar in New Caledonia had brought the Special Committee closer to a consensus on the way forward.

5. The Non-Self-Governing Territories, many of which were small island developing countries facing considerable challenges, needed the assistance of the international community. A paradigm shift was required in the approach to decolonization, and the

international community should remember that it was the express will and wishes of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories that should take pride of place. Owing to remaining Territories' isolation — the lack of interaction with the international community — there was a greater need for information dissemination, as that would help them make the final analysis and decisions as to what was available to them.

6. The Special Committee would continue to send United Nations visiting and special missions to Territories in order to make independent assessments of the situations there, and would continue to seek the cooperation of the administering Powers, to facilitate such missions, which were vital to drawing up action plans for decolonization and observing acts of self-determination. The Special Committee would consider combining visiting missions to certain Territories with regional seminars in order to optimize its available resources.

7. He commended the role of the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs in updating and expanding the Department's website on decolonization, which received approximately 12,000 page views per year. Each of the Territories had a unique mix of circumstances, often involving complex political issues, and it was essential that "creative thinking" that was sensitive to the specific circumstances was used by all concerned in addressing such issues, as there was no "one-size-fits-all" solution.

8. Joint and well-coordinated efforts were essential to promote the cause of decolonization; the Special Committee would continue to take the lead in facilitating the required cooperation.

9. **The Chairperson**, speaking in his national capacity, said that there was an urgent need for the Committee to move beyond the business-as-usual approach and accelerate the decolonization process in the remaining 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories.

10. The Committee should enhance its engagement with all stakeholders, including the administering Powers since close cooperation among all the parties concerned — the international Community, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the administering Powers — was crucial to completing the decolonization process. He was convinced that the Committee would be able to come up with action-oriented recommendations to further the cause of decolonization.

11. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, for which decolonization and the exercise of the fundamental right to self-determination had always been high priorities, said that colonialism in any form, including economic exploitation, was incompatible with United Nations principles. It was therefore unfortunate that efforts were still needed to do away with it.

12. He stressed the importance of the recommendations contained in the Final Document of the Fifteenth Summit Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, including the renewal of the call to States Members of the United Nations to speed up the process of decolonization towards the complete elimination of colonialism. It believed that the declaration of a third International Decade for the eradication of Colonialism, from 2011 to 2020, together with the setting of another short-term date to take stock of achievements and what needed to be done would send the right message and encourage all parties involved to speed up work with the aim of achieving tangible results through a concrete follow-up. The Movement strongly supported the recommendations and measures designed to facilitate the sustained and balanced growth of the fragile economies of those Territories.

13. The Non-Aligned Movement urged all administering Powers to pay full and fair compensation to the people of the Territories under their control for the economic, social and cultural consequences of their past or current occupation. At the same time, the United Nations must ensure that economic and other activities being carried out by the administering Powers of Non-Self-Governing Territories did not run counter to the interests of the people but instead promoted development and helped them make progress towards self-determination, while safeguarding their cultural identity and their heritage.

14. As a strong supporter of the work of the Special Committee, the Non-Aligned Movement urged administering Powers to cooperate with it.

15. The Movement's position on the question of Puerto Rico remained unchanged and had been outlined at the Ministerial Meeting of its Coordinating Bureau.

16. **Ms. Cordeiro Dunlop** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the State party in the process of accession, Venezuela (the Bolivarian Republic of), and the associated States

Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, said that she wished to reiterate their support for the legitimate rights of the Argentine Republic to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. That support had been expressed in the Presidential Declarations issued at Potrero de Funes, Argentina, in 1996 and Asunción, Paraguay, in 1999, and more recently, in a Joint Communiqué issued by the Common Market Council. The Communiqué had noted that the adoption of unilateral measures was incompatible with United Nations decisions and that it was in the interests of the whole region for the prolonged sovereignty dispute to be resolved as soon as possible, in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the declarations of the Organization of American States (OAS), MERCOSUR, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and other regional and multilateral forums. The inclusion of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands in the list of countries and Territories covered by part four of the Treaty establishing the European Community was incompatible with the existence of a sovereignty dispute.

17. General Assembly resolutions 2065 (XX), 3160 (XXVIII), 31/49, 37/9, 38/12, 39/6, 40/21, 41/40, 42/19 and 43/25, as well as the statements issued by the Special Committee on Decolonization from 1964 to 2010, had established that the question of the Malvinas Islands constituted a special and particular colonial situation involving a sovereignty dispute between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom, and that the only way to end the dispute was through a peaceful negotiated solution. MERCOSUR and its associated States recognized the constructive approach of the Argentine Government and supported the mission of good offices undertaken by the Secretary-General in accordance with the mandate entrusted to him by the General Assembly in its resolutions on the question. They rejected, however, the exploration of non-renewable natural resources being carried out by the United Kingdom on the Argentine continental shelf, in violation of General Assembly resolution 31/49, which called upon the two parties to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation while the islands were going through the process recommended by the General Assembly. That rejection had been reaffirmed by the Presidents of the States parties of MERCOSUR and associated States in the Special Declaration on Exploration of Non-renewable Natural Resources on the Argentine Continental Shelf, of 3 August 2010, in which those States also undertook, in accordance with international law, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the relevant national legislation, to refrain from facilitating the activities of ships intended to provide direct support to activities involving drilling for hydrocarbons that would affect the rights of the Argentine Republic over its continental shelf.

18. The year 2010, which marked the end of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, was especially important. MERCOSUR and its associated States reaffirmed their desire to see the early resumption of negotiations between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom, in compliance with the mandate of the international community set forth in all the relevant United Nations resolutions.

19. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, it was important to ensure that all peoples could exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. While the work of the United Nations had enabled many peoples to gain independence, the fact that there were still 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories on the United Nations list clearly showed that the decolonization process was not over. He reaffirmed the Rio Group's commitment to eradicating colonialism and called upon the administering Powers to take the necessary measures to achieve decolonization in all the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, taking into consideration the particular circumstances of each case. He also called upon the administering Powers to cooperate with the Committee and to transmit the information called for under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. The Rio Group endorsed the Special Committee's recommendation that 2011-2020 should be proclaimed as the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

20. The Group supported the work of the Department of Public Information to disseminate information on the objectives of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and urged it to redouble its efforts.

21. The Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom must resume their negotiations in order to find a peaceful, just and definitive solution to the

sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Special Committee and others, as soon as possible, bearing in mind the principle of territorial integrity. The Rio Group reiterated the Declaration and Special Communiqué on the issue of the Malvinas Islands and exploration for fossil fuels on the continental shelf adopted by the Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean gathered at the Unity Summit held in Mexico on 22 and 23 February 2010.

22. Measures should continue to be taken to promote sustained and balanced economic growth in the small island Territories in the Caribbean and Pacific and to enable them to exercise their right to self-determination. Special attention should also be paid to the serious problems affecting those Territories, including the rapid loss of land caused by rising sea levels as a result of climate change, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions and other natural disasters.

23. With regard to Western Sahara, the Rio Group affirmed its support for the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, reaffirmed General Assembly resolution 64/101 and reiterated that, in accordance with that resolution, they continued to support the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to reach a fair, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution leading to self-determination for the people of Western Sahara in the context of agreements that were compatible with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant resolutions.

24. In that regard, bearing in mind the four rounds of negotiations held in Manhasset and two rounds of informal talks in Dürnstein, Austria and in Westchester County, United States of America, the Rio Group hoped that those initiatives would lead to more intensive and substantive negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, and in accordance with international law. The Rio Group welcomed the agreement of the parties expressed in the communiqué of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, dated 18 March 2008. They looked forward to the establishment of family visits by land and the resumption of the existing programme of visits by air, and they encouraged the parties to cooperate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in regard to the implementation of the agreement.

25. **Mr. Valero** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that 50 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV)), the fact that 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories remained on the list of Territories to which the Declaration was applicable was a matter of concern to his Government. He once again appealed to the Government of the United States of America to allow the people of Puerto Rico to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence on the basis of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolution adopted by the Special Committee on decolonization on 21 June 2010 (A/AC.109/64/L.8).

26. The just demand of the Puerto Rican people had been reaffirmed by the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at the Fifteenth Summit held at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in July 2009, and in the Final Declaration of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA). It was time to put an end to the prolonged dispute between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom concerning sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and surrounding maritime areas. The good offices mandate entrusted to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly should be continued with a view to bringing the parties together as requested by the General Assembly and the Special Committee on decolonization in the relevant United Nations resolutions.

27. He urged the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations with a view to finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute. At the multilateral level, the United Nations, the Organization of American States and other forums had repeatedly called for an early solution to the prolonged dispute, as had UNASUR, the Summit of Arab and South American Countries, MERCOSUR and its associated States. His delegation endorsed the rejection by the Argentine Republic of the illegal and unilateral action of the United Kingdom in drilling for hydrocarbons on the continental shelf, in open defiance of the United Nations, in particular, General Assembly resolution 31/49.

28. His delegation fully supported the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and independence. His Government had officially recognized the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic — whose sovereignty and territorial integrity must be protected — as far back as 1983. Bilateral affairs with the Republic were handled by the Venezuelan Embassy in Algiers. The human rights of the Sahrawi people, including those living in refugee camps, must be respected. His delegation hoped that more intensive negotiations would be pursued in order to ensure the application of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant United Nations resolutions, which were the only legal instruments applicable in matters of decolonization.

29. He welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/101, which was a reaffirmation of the need to eliminate colonialism, racial discrimination and human rights violations. He also welcomed the proposal that the Special Committee on decolonization should appoint a committee to undertake as soon as possible a visit to the Territory of Western Sahara.

30. **Mr. Benítez** (Cuba) said that decolonization must continue to be a United Nations priority. Noting that 2010 marked the end of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, he said that his delegation supported the decision of the Special Committee to request the General Assembly to declare a third decade. It also called on the administering Powers to cooperate fully with the Special Committee on decolonization.

31. For the second time, a regional seminar on decolonization had been held in a Non-Self-Governing Territory, New Caledonia. The discussions that had taken place in those seminars should be more widely disseminated by the mass media in Member States, and the Department of Public Information should give priority to the issue of decolonization.

32. After more than a century of colonial rule, the people of Puerto Rico had not given up their difficult struggle to exercise their right to independence and self-determination and to preserve their identity as a Latin American and Caribbean nation. In June 2010, the Special Committee on decolonization had passed a resolution recognizing the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The member States of the Non-Aligned Movement maintained that the question of Puerto Rico was a colonial issue and that the United States had an obligation to accelerate the process of independence. The Movement also called for the implementation of the resolutions on the colonial case of Puerto Rico that had been passed by the Special Committee on decolonization.

33. The people of Western Sahara also had a right to determine their own future. Efforts to find a solution to the situation in that Territory should be continued in the context of those agreements that were consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

34. Cuba fully supported the legitimate sovereignty of Argentina over the Malvinas Islands as part of that country's national territory. It called for a negotiated, just and definitive solution to that question. The drilling activities undertaken by the United Kingdom on the Argentine continental shelf were contrary to the spirit and letter of General Assembly resolution 31/49.

35. Referring to the most recent Economic and Social Council resolution on support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations, the Territories had much to gain from the support that those agencies could provide; although some progress had been made, much remained to be done.

36. **Mr. Argüello** (Argentina) said that despite the outstanding success of the process of decolonization undertaken by the United Nations, which Argentina had fully supported, the continued existence of cases of colonialism in various forms constituted a crime that violated the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration on decolonization and the principles of international law embodied in General Assembly resolution 2621 (XXV).

37. Resolution 1514 (XV) made it clear that there was more than one form of colonialism and set out two principles that applied to different cases: self-determination and territorial integrity. Argentina had always been a firm defender of the right of peoples to self-determination. It could therefore not countenance the distortion of the principle of self-determination to justify the continued existence of an anachronistic colonial dispute that had breached the territorial integrity of Argentina since 1833. The sovereignty

dispute with the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas was indeed of the utmost importance to Argentina. Successive General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions had recognized the colonial situation there as special and particular, to be resolved through negotiations between the two parties in the interests of the population of the Islands. His Government had reiterated at every opportunity its willingness to negotiate in order to comply with its obligation to settle the dispute; it was now for the United Kingdom to fulfil its obligation as a Member of the United Nations to try to reach a settlement that would end the dispute.

38. **Mr. Rosenthal** (Guatemala) said that his Government firmly supported the legitimate claim of the Argentine Republic to sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. Thanks to the efforts of the United Nations, a large number of territories had been decolonized in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV); however, 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories were still under colonial rule. One of those was the Malvinas Islands, which constituted a special and particular situation to which the principle of self-determination was not applicable, given that the Territory itself was colonized, not the people. His delegations supported the mandate established by the General Assembly and the Special Committee on decolonization and hoped that the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom would resume bilateral negotiations in order to find a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the sovereignty dispute, in accordance with the provisions of relevant resolutions as soon as possible.

39. His delegation wished to express its serious concern regarding the activities undertaken unilaterally by the United Kingdom on the Argentine continental shelf, in violation of the wishes of the international community expressed in General Assembly resolution 31/49 and reaffirmed by the Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean at the Unity Summit held in Mexico in February 2010. As 2010 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the end of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, it was time to undertake a serious review of the still-pending question of the Malvinas Islands.

40. **Mr. Weisleder** (Costa Rica) said that the process of decolonization had been one of the memorable transformations brought about in the twentieth century, when a significant number of nations had become part of the United Nations as sovereign, independent States. It was essential to continue advocating the self-determination of the remaining 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories.

41. The full implementation of the Declaration on decolonization remained a collective challenge. Since its establishment, the Special Committee on decolonization had done outstanding work to achieve that end, as had the Secretary-General. The number of dependent Territories had indeed declined further during the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Costa Rica supported the recommendations made by the Special Committee in its report and hoped that the General Assembly would declare a Third International Decade.

42. The strengthened dialogue between the Special Committee and the administering Powers was a source of satisfaction. At the same time, it was worth exploring creative new ways of advancing the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the remaining Territories, case by case. The administering Powers as well should offer the needed cooperation and transmit relevant information on each of the Territories they administered, as called for in the Charter.

43. He drew attention to the declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Latin American and Caribbean countries in February 2010, reaffirming the region's interest in the resumption of negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom with a view to a peaceful, just and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, the South Georgia Islands and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including that of territorial integrity.

44. Furthermore, the United Nations must continue to facilitate a political, just and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara acceptable to all the parties involved. The people of Western Sahara must achieve self-determination within the framework of the current negotiations between the parties, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783

(2007), with the principles of international law set out in General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) that had always guided the Organization's process of decolonization, under which self-determination could lead either to a free choice to be linked to a State or a proclamation of independence. Costa Rica supported the work of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and urged the parties to cooperate fully with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the matter of family visits and other humanitarian aspects of the conflict.

45. **Mr. Parham** (United Kingdom) said that the British Government's relationship with its Overseas Territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of each Territory to determine whether it wished to stay linked to the United Kingdom or not, in which case his Government would remain committed to its future development and continued security, working in regular consultation with its elected leaders, in areas such as good governance, political and economic development and transparency, enhanced security and reduced vulnerability to natural and non-natural disasters.

46. His Government had over many years been engaged in reviewing the constitutions of a number of the Territories in order to reflect their circumstances in modern frameworks that would govern relations with the United Kingdom. All proposals for constitutional change received from the Territories had been carefully considered and the result had been updated constitutional provisions on matters such as human rights, good governance and the respective roles of the Governor and locally elected politicians. Between 2006 and 2010, new constitutions had come into force in Gibraltar, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the British Virgin Islands, the Falkland Islands, Saint Helena, the Cayman Islands and the Pitcairn Islands.

47. His Government was committed to allowing each Territory to run its own affairs as far as possible, which entailed responsibilities and good governance on the part of the Territory. Where, however, high standards of property and governance were not maintained, the United Kingdom did not hesitate to intervene, as it had done in 2009 when it had suspended the legislature and Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands, after a Commission of Inquiry had found serious systemic corruption and entrenched financial mismanagement. The United Kingdom was providing a temporary package of financial support to help the Territory act on its first priority, namely, dealing with a massive accumulated debt, but on the condition that the Territorial government embedded reforms and financial security in its practices. Until a series of specific milestones were met, elections would be postponed and parts of the 2006 Constitution would remain suspended.

48. His Government continued to encourage all the Territories to meet internationally recognized finance standards agreed by the Group of 20, and in fact six of its seven Overseas Territories with financial centres had been recognized as having implemented internationally agreed tax standards, and one more Territory expected to meet the standard by the end of 2010.

49. The Caribbean Overseas Territories had been hit particularly hard by the global downturn between 2009 and 2010, and their governments had taken tough decisions to help reduce the size of their deficits. While decisions on spending and revenue-raising were a devolved responsibility, his Government had worked closely with Territory governments as they restored public finances to a sustainable point.

50. **Mr. Gutiérrez** (Peru) said that the fiftieth anniversary of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) was an opportunity to reflect on how after half a century the United Nations could revitalize its decolonization mandate in order to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism that still existed in 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Special Committee on decolonization had been doing invaluable work, and it should keep assessing the situation in each one of the dependent Territories and maintain direct contact with the parties involved in order to hasten their decolonization. The administering Powers must cooperate actively with the Special Committee and do what was necessary to accelerate the decolonization and sustained growth of the colonized Territories.

51. There were two indispensable elements in achieving full decolonization: political will and a case-by-case approach. A matter of particular concern was the situation of the Malvinas Islands. The General Assembly had recognized it as a special case in its resolutions on the matter. Peru's position, like that of MERCOSUR, was that Argentina's legitimate sovereign rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas must be recognized, in accordance especially with General Assembly resolutions 2065 (XX) and 3160

(XXVIII). As indicated in all the pronouncements of the Special Committee since 1964, the only possible solution was negotiation between the parties involved. Until such negotiations were resumed, the provisions of General Assembly resolution 31/49 urging the parties to refrain from introducing unilateral modifications in the current situation of the islands were applicable. Consequently, the activities being undertaken by the United Kingdom involving exploration for non-renewable natural resources on the Argentine continental shelf were unacceptable and clearly contravened resolution 31/49. Peru urged both parties to seek a peaceful, just and lasting solution.

52. Colonialism, an obstacle to the development of dependent peoples and to the goal of world peace, must be eradicated, and with that in view, the period 2011-2020 should be declared the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

53. **Mr. Maboundou** (Congo), said that while the decolonization and independence of more than 80 former colonies had made the United Nations a truly universal organization, and all dependent peoples had an inalienable right to self-determination and independence, and the process was still incomplete. The administering Powers must work with the Special Committee on decolonization in order to grant them that fundamental right, by developing a constructive plan that reflected the particular situation of each Territory, served the people's interests and guaranteed its development. The opinions and wishes of the people must be heard. The Special Committee had to take a more pragmatic approach and deal objectively with the concerns and interests of all concerned.

54. The parties involved in the conflict over Western Sahara must be encouraged to pursue the negotiations undertaken in recent years under the auspices of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, who had made welcome efforts to achieve progress on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions. His Government urged the parties to show political will and intensify their negotiations on substantive issues so as to reach a settlement.

55. The Special Committee would do well to establish a working relationship with the Personal Envoy, exchange information regularly with the Security Council, and strengthen its ties with the Department of Information as it publicized the Organization's decolonization achievements. The importance of the kind of information about decolonization provided by the United Nations information centres in the developing countries was undeniable. The Special Committee's missions and regional seminars offered valuable encounters that furthered the assessment of progress made and allowed priorities to be set for the last year of the Second International Decade and a viable, dynamic and quantifiable programme of action to be developed for a Third International Decade.

56. **Mr. Parham** (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply regarding the issue of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, said that he wished to reiterate to the United Kingdom's well-known position that it had no doubts about its sovereignty over the Territory and that there could be no negotiations on sovereignty unless and until the Islanders so wished.

57. **Mr. Argüello** (Argentina), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his Government considered that the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were an integral part of Argentine territory and that, having been illegally occupied by the United Kingdom, they were the subject of a sovereignty dispute between the two countries, as had been recognized repeatedly in successive General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions, all of which had urged the two Governments to resume negotiations in order to find a peaceful, lasting solution to the dispute as soon as possible. That position had been endorsed also by the Organization of American States. Argentina reaffirmed its legitimate right of national sovereignty over the Territories in question.

Requests for hearings

58. **The Chairperson** drew attention to 108 requests for hearings under agenda item 59, relating to Gibraltar (A/C.4/65/2), Guam (A/C.4/65/3 and Add.1-5), New Caledonia (A/C.4/65/4), the Turks and Caicos Islands (A/C.4/65/5 and Add.1), the United States Virgin Islands (A/C.4/65/6) and Western Sahara (A/C.4/65/7 and Add.1-96), and to one request relating to both item 59 and item 57 (A/C.4/65/8). He took it that the Committee wished to grant those requests.

59. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.